

May 14, 2020

The May 14, 2020 virtual meeting of the Mansfield Township Environmental Commission was conducted via Zoom and began at 7:30 p.m. Participating were Paul Tarlowe, Dawn Smith, Marin Martin, Robert Jewell, Ruth Panté, Jim McMekin and Township Committee liaison representative Glen McGuinness. Glenn Todd and Kathy Todd did not respond to the meeting invitation. The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance. With the restrictions placed on public gatherings as a result of the CoronaVirus, no Environmental Commission meetings were held in March or April.

Minutes

Ms. Smith MOVED to postpone voting on the minutes of the February meeting until the next meeting, seconded by Mr. McGuinness; all in favor.

Committee Reports

2019 Open Space Grant: Ms. Smith reported this needs to be updated prior to circulating to Commission members; submission to ANJEC is due in June. Ms. Martin asked if extensions are available.

Bee huts: Ms. Martin reported the bee huts are in place, some of them are new; there is not much else to do at this time. Ms. Smith and Ms. Martin will meet to update the report which will be circulated to members in draft form. Ms. Martin reported all 75 cocoons have hatched, two in her hand.

2020 Open Space Grant: The application for a grant to improve the trail in Cafferata Park was submitted to ANJEC the last week in April; it has been acknowledged. Awarded grants are to be announced on May 29.

Mr. Tarlowe read a letter to the Environmental Commission from the Township offering thanks and appreciation for our efforts in arranging for this grant and the plans to enhance the trail at Cafferata Park; thanks were offered to Mr. Jewell for his generosity.

The NJ Audubon Society is working to record and offer an online gathering in lieu of the joint pollinator program at the Wattles Center previously planned for April 25. This could be shared on the Audubon website and via social media. NJ Fish and Wildlife had declined to participate in the online program. Mr. Tarlowe would like to see the Township and this Commission partner with NJ Audubon to enhance efforts. The 70-acre property joins a NJ Wildlife Management Area along the Musconetcong River.

Bluebird Nesting Boxes: Volunteers are needed to monitor nesting boxes; two families are currently participating. With two visits reported, one bird house has bluebirds with five hatchlings, and eggs are unhatched in the other box. There is activity at almost every birdhouse.

Land Use Board: Mr. Jewell reported a Resolution has been approved for the house that burned down in Port Murray; it is to be rebuilt. The Brinkerhoff property, with nine lots planned near Brantwood, has an extension until September to finalize their subdivision. A nine lot subdivision is sought; no taxes are paid on individual lots, only on the entire property; it is economically worth the effort, and this has been pending since 2007. New soil logs for septic systems are needed, but nothing will happen for a while. The Columbia Too property is now in the hands of Harrington and rumor says a recycling center may be planned for the site.

Environmental Issues

Mr. Jewell reported sighting a bear on Hoffman Road, estimated at 200 pounds.

Ms. Martin reported many birds of multiple varieties have appeared in her yard.
It was MOVED by Ms. Martin to adjourn at 7:58 p.m., seconded by Mr. Jewell. Mr. Tarlowe
proposed a virtual meeting be held again next month.

Respectfully submitted,
Ruth A. Panté, Clerk

Next meeting date: June 11, 2020